

Rabies in Idaho

In Idaho, only bats are known to be natural reservoirs for rabies. However, bats are not the only animal of interest when it comes to rabies. All mammals may become infected with rabies and should ALL be considered potentially rabid when they expose a human or other animal to saliva or nervous tissue (brain or spinal cord).

Between 1999 and 2005 an average of 16 bats (range of 5 – 38) per year, or 10.6% of bat submissions (range: 4.8% to 19.8%), tested positive for rabies by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare Bureau of Laboratories.

NOTE: This data includes only rabid animals that actually were submitted for testing to the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories; the actual number of rabid bats (and other species) in Idaho is likely much higher. Rabid bats have been reported from almost all parts of Idaho and have been detected from May to November.

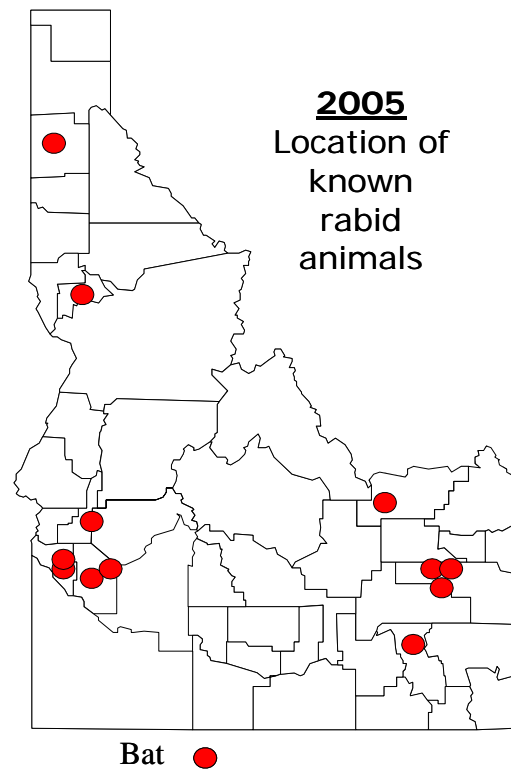
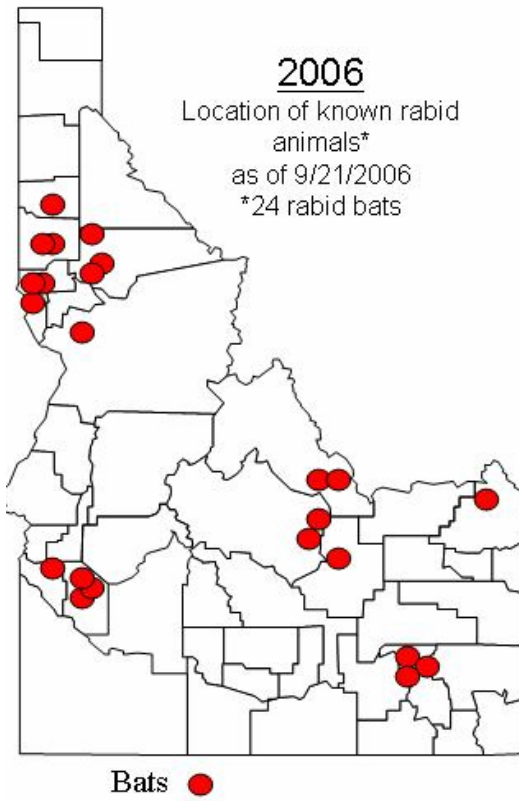
A handful of other species have also been documented as having the bat strain of rabies in Idaho (see table). Because other mammals have tested positive for rabies, the risk of rabies exposures from bites, scratches, or other exposures from mammals other than bats must not be ignored and should be discussed with a healthcare provider to determine if rabies post-exposure prophylaxis would be recommended.

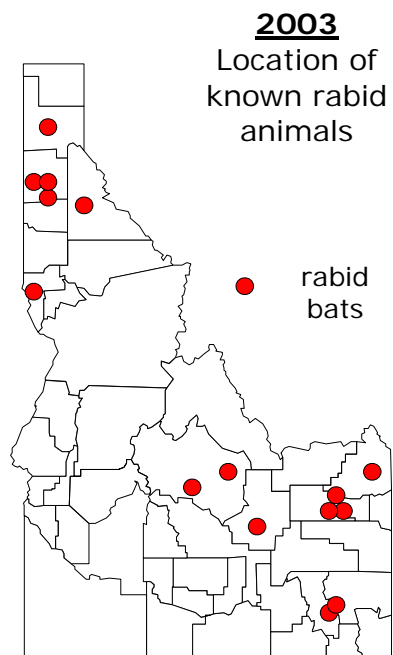
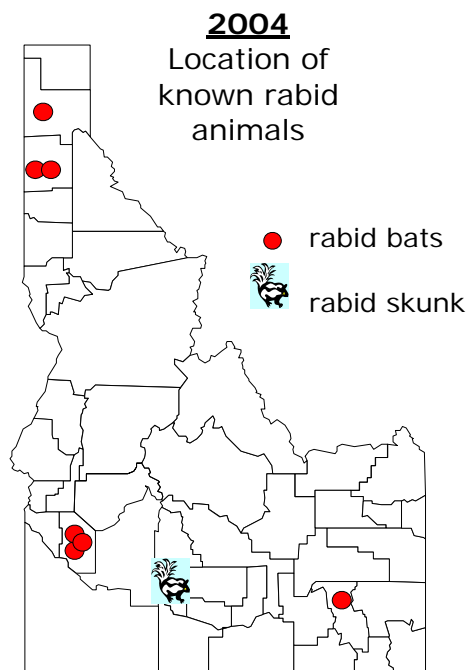
The Epidemiology of Rabies in Idaho

The table below represents rabid animals detected in Idaho between 1999 and 2005. Additional rabies findings in animals other than bats are included for historical purposes.

Year	Rabid bats	Other rabid animals
2005	12	0
2004	7	1 skunk (District 5)
2003	15	0
2002	38	0
2001	28	1 bobcat (District 6)
2000	10	0
1999	5	1 horse (District 7)
Historical Data		
1992		1 cat (District 7)
1991		1 cat (District 7)
1968		1 raccoon imported from Florida (District 2)
1967		1 cat (District 1)
1967		1 skunk (District 3)

NOTE: This is only a representation of rabid animals that have been submitted to the Idaho Bureau of Laboratories for testing.





The actual geographic distribution of rabies in Idaho may be more far-reaching than is known due to a lack of human habitation, and therefore, a lack of samples submitted for testing. In addition, bats migrate annually and may introduce rabies into an area not previously reporting rabid animals. No area can be deemed rabies-free.

